

# issues

## Message from the State Veterinarian

Greetings from the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH). As you know, Hurricane Katrina affected not only the human population, but the animal population as well. To many hurricane victims, losing their possessions couldn't compare to losing their beloved pets. Since most shelters cannot accept animals many people chose to ride out the storm rather than evacuate to a shelter.

In an effort to keep victims and their pets together, as awareness of the dilemma grew, Department of Homeland Security officials eventually allowed residents to bring pets on flights out of the disaster-stricken areas. As evacuations began, BOAH was notified that flights containing people and their pets could be headed our way. This alert sent our staff into preparedness mode. BOAH's staff went to work seeking volunteers and supplies to examine and treat animals arriving from the hurricane zone.

As a Hoosier veterinarian, I have always been confident that in an emergency our community of animal health professionals would willingly volunteer their time and talents. I must say I am truly proud of the overwhelming response to our requests. Veterinarians, technicians, volunteers, drug companies, animal shelters and animal lovers alike came out in droves to offer their assistance in the relief effort. Veterinarians and technicians from across Indiana offered to travel to Indianapolis International Airport to examine and treat animals. Veterinary clinics offered everything from vaccines and microchips to housing and drug companies offered plenty of supplies. This outpouring of support reminds me how invaluable Indiana's animal health professionals truly are.

In the aftermath of Katrina, and the obvious interest in emergency response, I encourage veterinarians and technicians to consider taking advantage of the disaster preparedness training opportunities available in Indiana. BOAH offers a one-day class specific to this topic. The "Animal Issues in Disasters" course presents an overview of topics regarding animal-related emergencies. The first half of the course addresses the economic, social, emotional and logistical impacts of a large-scale animal health emergency, such as a foot-and-mouth disease break in the United States. The course presents the response plan for BOAH and USDA veterinarians to work to control and eradicate a disease. The second half of the class guides participants through the process of writing a local preparedness plan for responding to the needs of animals and their owners during natural and/or man-made disasters (such as tornadoes, floods or chemical spills).

Upon completion of the course, participants will have the foundation of a local, grass roots animal disaster plan, as well as an understanding of how events would unfold under Indiana's state emergency response plan. Continuing education credit is available for veterinarians and technicians, upon completion of the class. The course is offered at no charge by Indiana's Public Safety Training Institute and BOAH.

For more information about emergency response or to inquire about the "Animal Issues in Disasters" course, contact BOAH at 317-227-0300 or [animalhealth@boah.in.gov](mailto:animalhealth@boah.in.gov).

Bret D. Marsh, DVM  
Indiana State Veterinarian

# issues

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## BOAH Board Actions

**DURING THEIR** regular meeting, Board members took the following actions:

- Approved first readings of three proposals that will be considered again for a final vote after public hearings at the October 13 meeting:
  - amends rule concerning the movement of sheep and goats into Indiana;
  - amends rules concerning the slaughter of domestic rabbits for human consumption;
  - amends the rabies control rule to incorporate sections of 2005 Compendium on Animal Rabies Control.

## Meat & Poultry

**INDIANA STATE** meat inspectors may have a new responsibility soon. The Board recently approved the first reading of a law approving a voluntary inspection program for the slaughter of domesticated rabbits and the processing of rabbit products for human consumption. Currently Indiana law does not permit the inspection of rabbit in slaughter facilities. As a voluntary program, slaughter facilities will be charged a fee for this inspection process.

According to the Retail Food Establishment Sanitation Requirements, all meat products sold by food vendors must be processed at an inspected facility. All rabbit meat currently sold in Indiana must be imported from other states as locally no state or USDA facilities are approved for the inspection of rabbit slaughter and processing. This new rule would provide opportunity for growth in Indiana's meat rabbit industry.

## Companion Animal

**CANINE INFLUENZA** virus has emerged as a potentially serious problem in the dog population. The virus, which causes an acute respiratory infection, has sickened and/or killed dogs in Florida, Massachusetts, Arizona, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Texas and Iowa. Infection was initially identified in greyhounds at dog racing tracks.

Two general clinical presentations of this virus may be seen. The milder occurs in most dogs. The most common clinical sign is a cough that persists for 10 days to 21 days. Milder cases may also present nasal discharge and a low-grade fever. Dogs that develop the more severe disease may show clinical signs of pneumonia including high fever and increased respiratory rate and effort. Fatal cases of pneumonia have been documented; however, the fatality rate so far is low, at one to five percent.

In the event that a veterinarian believes he/she may have a case of canine influenza, please contact Dr. Sandi Norman, Companion Animal and Equine Director at 317/227-0323 or [snorman@boah.in.gov](mailto:snorman@boah.in.gov).

## Cattle/Ruminant

**AS FALL** arrives and hunting season begins the topic of chronic wasting disease (CWD) again comes to the forefront. BOAH continues to work with the Department of Natural Resources to educate hunters about the impact this disease could have on Indiana's wild and farmed deer populations. BOAH reminds hunters that special precautions must be made when carcasses of deer harvested outside of Indiana are imported into the state. For a detailed list of importation rules visit [www.boah.in.gov](http://www.boah.in.gov).

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## Scrapie

**THE FIRST** reading of a new scrapie rule was approved by the Board and will be up for public hearing at their next meeting on Oct. 13. This rule is needed to meet federal regulations pertaining the national scrapie program. BOAH has been following federal regulations regarding scrapie since the inception of the program. This rule incorporates the current program into state law. Questions about the proposed scrapie rule may be addressed to Dr. Cheryl Miller, Director, Scrapie Program at [cmiller@boah.in.gov](mailto:cmiller@boah.in.gov).

## Dairy

**THE DAIRY** division at the Board of Animal Health is in a state of change. Following the resignation of division director George Jones, Indiana State Veterinarian Dr. Bret Marsh announced the formation of a transition team. The transition team, which Dr. Marsh chairs personally, consists of BOAH staff members. The intent of the transition team is to evaluate the current status of the division and assess future needs, goals and directions for BOAH's role in the growing dairy industry. The first step for BOAH's transition team is to gather feedback and input from all sectors of the dairy industry—producers, haulers, processors, cooperatives and veterinarians.

## Disaster Preparedness/ASERT

**ASA** proactive measure BOAH has developed ASERT, or Animal Surveillance Emergency Response Teams, to call upon in the event of an animal health emergency in Indiana. ASERT teams consist of veterinarians from across the state, equipped with technology and knowledge to respond in any type of animal health emergency, be it a natural or a bioterrorism disaster. Sixty veterinarians have volunteered their time and talents to become a part of the ASERT program. These veterinarians are divided into 11 teams, grouped by their locations throughout the state.

ASERT members are gearing up for the first training meeting this month. Teams will be trained in all the aspects of emergency response including incident command and agriculture bioterrorism. Experts from throughout the country will be speaking about emergency response in an animal health emergency.

As the ASERT project grows, BOAH hopes to expand the program to include even more Hoosier veterinarians. For more information regarding ASERT or disaster preparedness contact Dr. Marianne Ash, Director of Bioplanning at 317/-227-0347 or [mash@boah.in.gov](mailto:mash@boah.in.gov).

## Animal Identification

**THE BUZZ** about premise and animal identification is moving quickly. BOAH, in conjunction with USDA Farm Service Agency, Indiana Beef Cattlemen's Association and Indiana Pork Producer's Association, has been busy spreading the word and registering premises. The staff at BOAH recently produced an Indiana-specific brochure about animal identification. Veterinary clinics interested in distributing these brochures to clients may contact Dr. Jennifer Greiner, Director of Identification Programs, at 317/227-0328 or at [jgreiner@boah.in.gov](mailto:jgreiner@boah.in.gov).

## Avian

**DR. MICHAEL** Kopp, Director, Avian Division, has been working in conjunction with the Indiana State Poultry Association and USDA on the new proposed National Poultry Improvement Plan Control Program for H5/H7 Low-Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI). This program will promote the development of flock plans to help eradicate H5/H7 LPAI from positive flocks or to prevent the

introduction of the virus into other flocks. For more information regarding Avian Influenza or the National Poultry Improvement Plan contact Dr. Michael Kopp at 317/227-0324 or at [mkopp@boah.in.gov](mailto:mkopp@boah.in.gov).

## Equine

**WEST NILE** virus has made its way into Indiana's equine population. During the month of September, four Indiana horses were diagnosed with the debilitating ailment. One horse was euthanized and two others died from this debilitating disease.. A 2-year-old quarter horse in Clinton County is recovering. All of the horses were previously unvaccinated.

West Nile virus has become a part of life for Hoosier horse owners. 2001 marked the first diagnosis of West Nile virus for Indiana. By 2002 Indiana had a record number of infected animals that included 722 horses and two dogs. 2003's total declined significantly to 49 horses. The decline continued with only nine positive horses and one infected dog for 2004. Widespread use of vaccinations as well as diligence in eliminating breeding sites for mosquitoes has helped to decrease the number of infected animals in Indiana.

Typically, the first equine cases of West Nile do not surface until late summer, but reports can continue through the fall. Veterinarians are encouraged to remind property owners to work to eliminate potential breeding sites for mosquitoes, including sources of standing water, like puddles, buckets, old tires, gutters and bird baths. Mosquitoes can reproduce in very small quantities of standing water in less than a week. Horse owners should pay close attention to keeping water in stock tanks fresh.